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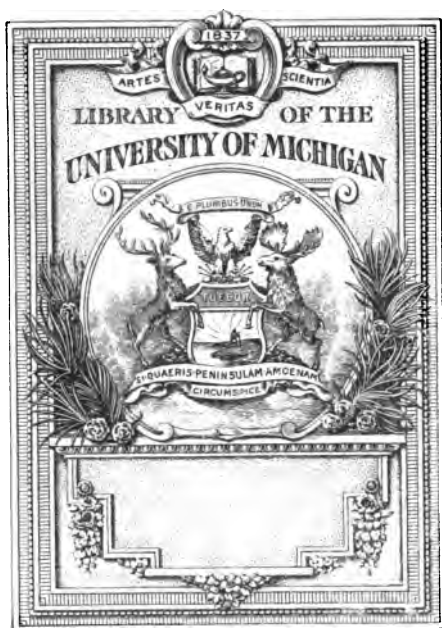
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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE 12131
LITERARY SOCIETIES
OF
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,
ON
THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE
OF
GERMAN LITERATURE.

DELIVERED AT
HANOVER, N. H., JULY 24, 1839.

BY A. H. EVERETT.

Boston :
HENRY L. DEVEREUX, PRINTER,
4 Water Street.

1839.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, JULY 24, 1839.

TO HON. A. H. EVERETT.

Dear Sir :—At the Anniversary meeting of the two Literary Societies, United Fraternity and Social Friends, held on this day, it was—

RESOLVED :—That the thanks of the Societies be presented to the Hon. A. H. Everett for his *very excellent and eloquent* Oration, and that a copy be requested for publication.

We cannot but express our individual, earnest wishes that this resolution may receive your favorable notice.

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servants,

J. BOWEN CLARK,	} Committee of the Societies.
S. DANA,	
A. FRANKLIN EDWARDS,	
E. H. BARSTOW,	
R. J. CARPENTER,	
A. STEPHENS,	

HANOVER, N. H. JULY 24, 1839.

Gentlemen :—I have received your letter of this day, communicating a Resolve adopted by the Literary Societies at their late Anniversary Meeting.

Permit me through you to offer to the Societies my sincere acknowledgments for the very friendly terms in which they have been pleased to mention the Address. Agreeably to their desire I have the honor to place a copy at your disposal and am with great regard, Gentlemen,

Very Truly and Respectfully, Your Friend,

And Obedient Servant,

A. H. EVERETT.

MESSRS. J. BOWEN CLARK,	} Committee of the Societies.
S. DANA,	
A. FRANKLIN EDWARDS,	
E. H. BARSTOW,	
R. J. CARPENTER,	
A. STEPHENS,	

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETIES :—In selecting a topic for the present Address I have thought it superfluous to invite your attention to a statement of the arguments in favor of education and improvement. They are familiar to you all, and have become by frequent repetition on public occasions almost common-place. The general aspect of the country, and especially the section we inhabit ; the schools that abound in our towns and villages ; the academies that are found in almost every county ; the universities and colleges of which several more or less flourishing adorn nearly every one of our confederated states ; the new efforts that are making in all quarters in the cause of education ; finally, Gentlemen, the very purpose for which we are assembled ; this brilliant concourse of spectators, in a region remote from the great centres of population, brought together

by no other purpose than that of gratifying their taste for the highest and purest intellectual and moral pursuits, or their personal interest in those who are engaged in them ; all these circumstances seem to show that the public mind is already deeply impressed with the importance of education. I have therefore thought that the hour which we are to pass together might perhaps be more profitably employed in the consideration of some particular topic, connected with the literary and scientific objects, to which alone on this occasion we should for a moment feel a wish to direct our attention. For on these auspicious anniversaries set apart for purposes in which all the people take an equal interest, I need not say that the most remote allusion to the ordinary topics of party strife and contention should be carefully excluded. We meet to day not as members of sects and parties, but as friends and fellow laborers in a common cause ; as fellow citizens of the great Republic of Letters ; as brothers of the family of man.

In pursuance of these ideas I propose, Gentlemen, on the present occasion, to offer you some remarks upon the *Character and Influence of the Literature of Germany* ; a subject which of late years has justly excited and continues to excite a great and constantly increasing interest. Germany, though separated from us by a broad intervening ocean, is closely connected with us in all the points which belong to moral and intellectual character. Our forefathers who came to this country from the British isles drew their own

origin from the banks of the Rhine and the depths of the Hercynian forest. It is to these scenes so famous in classical history that we are finally carried back when we seek out the real *incunabula gentis*, the original head quarters of that remarkable race which from these central points has spread itself over the whole north of Europe and is fast spreading itself over the whole of North America. Germany is the head spring of our language, laws, and polity. The British Constitution, the basis of our own, and for a long time the great exemplar of regulated liberty, was found, says the illustrious Montesquieu, in the woods of Germany. Our form of Christianity which we prize so highly and consider so important, has been transmitted to us in later times from the same quarter :—and what I deem far more essential than any mere form of religion or government, we refer to our Anglo-Saxon origin the high moral qualities,—the enterprize, the industry,—the courage, active and passive,—the temperance, prudence, and patience,—the generosity and frankness,—above all, the earnestness and sincerity, which distinguish the German race under all its various names, and have given it,—wherever they have come into contact,—an easy ascendancy over the graceful and brilliant but far less manly, bold and vigorous genius of the South. Finally, Gentlemen, we have seen in this later age, —within the last half century,—this same antique soil, blooming with the rich products of a new universal philosophy and a new school of polite literature ; products which have fixed to an almost

unexampled extent the attention of the world and continue to exercise a powerful influence upon the development and progress of the mind throughout Christendom.

I mention these facts, Gentlemen, in evidence of the extent to which the influence of Germany has modified, in the most various ways, our whole intellectual and moral existence. Of the numerous interesting points to which I have cursorily alluded, I must confine myself strictly on the present occasion, to the last in the order of time, the new school of polite Literature. Even of this any thing like a thorough and full examination is of course precluded by the limits of the occasion. If by presenting a few of the salient points with as much relief and distinctness as my humble ability may render practicable, I can excite such an interest in the subject as will lead you to follow up my imperfect hints by independent researches of your own, my hopes will be more than satisfied. I select the literary in preference to the philosophical department of the subject, not because I consider it more important, but because from its greater popularity it seems better fitted to the purpose of a public address.

The earliest literature of Germany, though rich, original and vigorous, never assumed a classical shape, and has come down to us in the form of materials rather than finished works. The patriotic enthusiasm of our own time has attempted to elevate the Lay of the Nibelungen into a grand national Epic ; but although the subject and char-

acter are well adapted for this purpose, the execution is too imperfect. The scene is laid in part at the court or rather head quarters of Attila the Hun, but so dim and shadowy are the delineations of the characters, and so imperfect is our knowledge of the history of the period, that no one has yet undertaken to fix with certainty or even probability the local position and national character of the Nibelungen warriors who form the heroes of the story. With the disappearance of these shadowy personages from the scene of action, literature sinks into a long slumber from which she has only revived since the Reformation. Luther himself combined with his power of thought and iron will, literary talents of the highest order, which, had it not been his vocation to be the first of Reformers, would have rendered him one of the greatest of Philosophers and Poets. His translation of the Scriptures,—a Herculean labor for a single man,—while it proves the extent of his industry and perseverance, is thought to have done more than any other work to fix the standard of the German language. His writings, in prose and verse, are instinct with a life and spirit which with a higher finish of style would have made them master pieces of art. But although the mighty Reformer possessed himself very superior literary capacities and accomplishments, the results of his labors were far from being immediately favorable to the development of learning. The great movement of the Reformation, which for the two following centuries covered Germany with

armies and broke up the people into bitter religious parties, absorbed their whole intellectual activity and left no scope for the culture of Letters. It is only within the last century, after these long controversies had subsided and the progress of civilization and knowledge had introduced a more correct state of feeling in regard to the minor differences of opinion out of which they had grown, that the proper literary age of Germany begins to open. Its rising was heralded by a sort of twilight produced by an imitation of the literature of France which obtained a temporary popularity in Germany, partly by its own attraction and partly in consequence of the countenance given to it by Frederic the Great, King of Prussia.

It was a rather curious fact that in an age when the ancient ideas of the divine right of kings, with all the associations favorable to arbitrary government that had been connected with them, were rapidly giving place to sounder political theories, there appeared at once in several parts of the Continent a considerable number of hereditary sovereigns whose moral and intellectual powers were such as to counteract in some degree the democratic tendencies of the age and throw a sort of false glory over the old age of decaying Royalty. Peter the Great of Russia, William the Third of England, Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, and Louis the Fourteenth of France, all of them conspicuous, though in very different ways and degrees, for elevation of character and power of mind, illustrated the commencement of the last

century. Catherine, Maria Theresa, Joseph the Second of Austria, Gustavus the Third of Sweden, and the Great Frederic of Prussia shed a constantly increasing splendor over its progress and close. Though possessed of less disposable means than most of the persons who figure upon this brilliant list, Frederic achieved more important results, and left behind him a higher reputation than any of them. He gave to his dominions, which had been raised by his father to the nominal rank of a kingdom, a substantial and permanent existence as a first rate power. He infused into the administration of Prussia the spirit of intelligence, justice, patriotism and liberality, which has ever since pervaded it, and has at length brought it practically to a degree of perfection unsurpassed in any respect, unequalled in some, even by the more liberal governments of Europe and America. What a proof of the vast results that are effected under favorable circumstances by the influence of a single great and wise man ! I apply these epithets to Frederic not because I consider him as by any means a faultless character. Issuing from as crabbed a stock as ever grew in the not very productive garden of Royalty, educated under the worst influences, it would have been a miracle indeed had he not exhibited some glaring imperfections ; but the natural power and elevation of his mind, under the guidance of adversity, the only good teacher he ever had, raised him from the level of common kings to a consummate statesman and commander,—a most efficient administrator,—a widely en-

quiring, and keenly, if not always correctly discerning philosopher,—an elegant scholar and poet. Lord Brougham, in the brilliant portrait gallery, by which he has recently acquired so much honor and exhibited in general so nice a discernment of character, has hardly done justice to the great, or as he was called by the enthusiastic admiration of his people, the *unique Frederic*.* Of the hereditary sovereigns of Europe from Clovis to Charles the Tenth, he is perhaps the most illustrious, and this is saying much of a list that includes such names as those of Alfred, Charlemagne and Peter. But Frederic was one of those sovereigns whose rank must be estimated not by comparison with other sovereigns but with other great men. In political and military talent he rises to a level with the Cæsars, the Alexanders, and the Napoleons, while he superadds to the elegant literary taste and talent for which they were all conspicuous, something of the moral energy and purity which they wanted and which is exemplified so much more fully in our Washington. Is it nothing for the same man to contend in the field single-handed and successfully with Europe in arms from Archangel to Cadiz,—to pass his mornings in despatching the business of his kingdom without the aid of ministers, and his evenings in leading the conversation of a circle of the most celebrated wits and philosophers of the time? See him in his tent on the eve of a desperate action in which his fortunes were at stake composing an epistle in verse to Voltaire! See him in his later years concluding

* *Friedrich der Einzige*.

with the minister of the United States the first treaty which expressly provided for the immunity of the persons and property of individuals in a time of public war. I confess that I look back with deep emotion as well as high patriotic pride to the interesting scene, when the war-worn chief of exhausted Europe stretched out over intervening oceans the right hand of fellowship to the venerated Father of our young Republic, for the purpose of uniting with him in a humane and christian proclamation of peace on earth and good will toward men. However unfavorably we may think of some points in the character of Frederic, and I have no disposition to extenuate his errors or his faults, I must say that he exemplifies more fully and in a higher degree than almost any other sovereign the various elements of greatness and is, as he has been pronounced by his countrymen, nearly *unique* in the annals of modern Europe.

It was not my intention, however, to enlarge upon the general character of this distinguished monarch, but rather to advert to his influence on the literature of Germany. It is perhaps natural that a sovereign whose time and attention were constantly absorbed by the public affairs, and who cultivated philosophy and letters as a recreation from business, should follow in these pursuits the current of the age in which he lived. Entertaining more intimate relations with the other Courts of Europe, in all which French literature gave the tone, than with the mass of his own subjects he

considered the French as a sort of universal language and disdained the noble German dialect as vulgar and barbarous. Under these impressions he always conversed and wrote his own letters and books in French, sought for his literary associates among the poets and philosophers of France, and gave no attention to the state of learning in his own kingdom and country, where a rich growth of native genius was just springing up with unusual vigor and promising at no distant period a harvest of golden fruit. But the taste of the king found in this respect no sympathy in the nation. The light and frivolous though brilliant character of the French school of philosophy and learning, especially as it exhibited itself at this period, when lightness and frivolity had degenerated into licentiousness and irreligion, was entirely alien from the thoughtful, enthusiastic and essentially earnest and religious disposition of Germany. The taste or French literature never became general, and instead of gaining favor with the people, has gradually given place to a strong feeling of an opposite character.

The transitory influence which it exercised over the mind of the nation has left, however, one remarkable memorial in the writings of Wieland, popularly known as the author of *Oberon*. He began with poems of a severe and strictly religious character, founded on scripture subjects; but adopted as his mature manner the levity of the French and Italian schools, which pervades the whole of his voluminous poems and novels. A

change in a different direction corresponds with that which is regularly incident to the progress of years and may be considered as not unnatural ; but a mind which after once feeling the sublime beauties of the Bible, could afterwards sink to the level of the school of Ariosto and Voltaire could never have possessed any real elevation or capacity for excellence. The *Oberon*, his most successful and celebrated work, is familiar to us in the translation of Sotheby. It is a brilliant and beautiful production, but has nothing German about it except the language. The subject, the characters, the tone of moral feeling and the style are all French and French according to the school of Louis XV. I may say this with the less scruple as the poet would have considered it the highest compliment that could be paid to his work. Wieland survived to a very advanced age not undistinguished as a poet, though in some measure shorn of his beams by the brilliancy of the national school. He was still living when the Emperor Napoleon crossed the Rhine in the year 1807, just before that memorable day when the glorious star of Brandenburg was quenched, not forever as Sir Walter Scott at the time despondingly supposed, but for a few years only in the blood stained waters of the Jena. On that occasion Napoleon sought an interview with Wieland ; but the minstrel of *Oberon* had but little in common with the 'Man of Destiny.' The record of their conversation has found its way into the memoirs of the time

but contains nothing, if I recollect rightly, of a striking character.

Wieland, had, in fact, as I remarked just now, disappeared long before from public view as a leading literary character, the attention of the world having been withdrawn from him, by the greater interest which attended the movements of the new national school. The pioneers in these, among others which time will not permit me to allude to, were Lessing, Herder and Klopstock : the most conspicuous leaders were the celebrated brother Poets, Schiller and Goethe.

Lessing is a transition character. His genius was critical rather than creative, and his philosophy exhibits a mind which though aiming at better things had not entirely freed itself from the degrading influence of the French sensualism. His taste was however fine and his power of execution, though unequal, at times very great. The *Emilia Galotti*, which is the story of the Roman Virginia adapted to the manners of a German Court, is one of the most beautiful specimens of modern dramatic literature. Herder on the other hand, though inferior in taste and power of execution to Lessing, has the merit of being wholly German, excepting when he rises from the comparatively narrow platform of mere patriotism to the loftier and wider views which embrace the history of the whole human race. Lessing retained something of the mockery of the French school : Herder, a true German, is uniformly earnest, and serious. He was the first modern critic who carried

the light of taste and literature into the study of the Scriptures, and who really felt and justly appreciated their literary merit. His beautiful dialogues on Hebrew poetry, which have recently been translated in this country, are still the best work on the subject and will be the most durable monument to his memory ; although his *Thoughts on the History of Man*, are well worthy of the attention of the philosophical student.

Of the trio just mentioned, Klopstock, the minstrel of the Messiah, is undoubtedly the most conspicuous. He aspired to be the Milton of Germany, and the immense enthusiasm which attended the first appearance of his Poem, seemed to show that his high aspirations were likely to be realized. But the "sober second thought" of another generation does not seem to have confirmed the verdict which was rendered by his contemporaries. The sublime realities of Religion, as taught in the Bible, are in fact, as Dr. Johnson remarked, too sacred for poetry. Even Milton fails when he attempts to introduce or even to pourtray the divinity in person ; and only exhibits with advantage the splendor of his genius where his subject brings him into contact with human scenes and actors. The sublime and mysterious personage, whose human actions, words and sufferings occupy the pages of the New Testament, is an even less appropriate theme for poetical and rhetorical amplification. The mind recoils almost with terror from an attempt to clothe the narrative in any other dress than the naked simplicity of the sacred record in

which we are accustomed to read it from our infancy. The *Paradise Regained* of Milton, admirable in many respects as it certainly is, shrinks from comparison as a poem with its noble companion-work ;—the acknowledged master piece of the art. But if the events recorded in the New Testament could ever be treated with success it would be by a genius akin to that of Klopstock, serious, earnest, tender, impassioned, enthusiastic,—alive to the beautiful, the pathetic, the sublime. The charm of his works is, I suspect, in some degree impaired by a foreign system of versification formed upon the Greek and Roman models which he attempted to engraft upon the language of Germany. The effort met with some success and the example of Klopstock has been in this respect followed by many imitators, but I greatly doubt whether this system of verse ever obtained full possession of the popular German ear. As poetry is a spontaneous outpouring of the mind, so the forms in which it clothes itself, in order to be really acceptable, should be a native product of the taste of the people by which it is to be read. When we attempt to produce in modern times the versification of Homer and Virgil, we cannot be certain that we employ the same methods and experience seems to show but too clearly that we certainly do not produce the same effects. It was the happiness of Milton that with all his learning and love of foreign languages and literature, he followed in his forms of verse the genius of his own country not less implicitly than he obeyed in pouring out

the substance of his poems the promptings of his own unrivalled and original mind.

But whatever may be the merit of Klopstock, which I am in no way disposed to underrate, whatever may have been the impression which he made upon his contemporaries, and it was undoubtedly deep and general, Schiller and Goethe seem to have been the first persons who obtained by literary efforts a complete mastery over the German mind, and secured that universal and permanent reputation which places them on the same line with the few first rate poets that belong to humanity and to all time rather than to any particular age or country. They are the most prominent names in the literature of Europe during the long interval of half a century that separates the period of Rousseau and Voltaire from that of Scott and Byron. When they rose upon the literary hemisphere of Germany, Klopstock and Wieland,—then the great lights of the day,—with a host of others of minor importance were eclipsed. They shone together for many years in friendly conjunction as brothers and allies rather than competitors at the brilliant and intellectual Court of the Duke of Saxe Weimar. When Schiller, too early for his own glory and for the pleasure and instruction of the world, had disappeared, Goethe reigned alone for twenty or thirty years the undisputed monarch of German literature and acknowledged by many, including one of the very few persons who could fairly have contested the palm with him,—I mean Lord Byron,—as the literary Sovereign of Europe.

As they were generally considered at the time as the intellectual masters of literary Europe, so the development and progress of their minds corresponded very accurately with that of the mind of Europe during the critical and eventful period in which they lived. In their earlier productions they exhibit the restlessness, the indignant, passionate, in some degree blind and feverish, effort to reform existing abuses in political and religious institutions, which characterised the moral and intellectual movements of the earlier part of the last century. Schiller in the *Robbers* and Goethe in the *Sorrows of Werther* gave utterance, each for himself, by an entirely spontaneous, unborrowed, original impulse, to that *Everlasting No*,—as Carlyle quaintly calls it,—that universal denial of all received opinions in philosophy, politics and religion, which was the general outcry of corrupted, misgoverned, alarmed, bewildered, despairing Europe through the earlier part of the last century. At the height of their activity came on the grand and terrible catastrophe of the movement then in progress,—the French Revolution,—which illustrated by the real though imperfect reforms which it introduced, the correctness in many respects of the previously existing popular opinions, as well as by its appalling horrors the fearful errors that were intermingled with them. This movement was attended by a grand display of military talent, which for a time diverted the attention of the world from every other subject, and was followed immediately by that general return of the public mind to

moral and religious ideas, which constitutes the leading characteristic of the literature of the present age.

The minds of Schiller and Goethe were enlightened and affected like the universal mind of Europe by these events. Their later writings, particularly those of Goethe, who lived much longer than Schiller, distinctly indicate the new tendency. Thus their literary career became the exact reflexion, and they themselves as it were personifications of the progress and condition under several successive changes of intellectual Europe during the period of their own activity.

Let us look a little more nearly at the lives of these distinguished men. Schiller commenced his career as a student at the military school at Stuttgart. Cramped by the strict discipline of this institution and disgusted by the uncongenial spirit that pervaded it, he generalises these feelings in his celebrated play of the Robbers:—the first fiery outpouring of his still immature genius. In this wild production, society is represented as a sort of moral chaos, where fraud and violence maintain the ascendancy, and where good men are driven to the commission of highway robbery and murder, as the only means of obtaining a subsistence. The hero, Charles Moor, carries into this honorable profession the magnanimity of a Brutus and the graceful deportment of a Grandison. He is the prototype of the splendid and sentimental cut-throats, who have subsequently figured with so much brilliancy in the pages of Byron, and who are now re-appearing

with diminished brightness and increased absurdity in those of Bulwer. But even in this strange caricature of the real action of life, the genius of Schiller displayed itself with so much power as to fix the public attention and to render him at once a conspicuous character. Encouraged by success and praise, he now abandoned the unfriendly scene of the military Institute and gave up his gradually ripening faculties to the independent culture of letters and especially poetry. After various adventures and several intermediate changes of residence, he was received as an inmate in the literary circle of the Court of Weimar, where Goethe, who was already established as the presiding genius, cheerfully consented to divide the crown with Schiller for the rest of his life. Rarely indeed do we find in the history of the irritable race of poets and literary men, an equally honorable example of cordial and long continued friendship between rival claimants for the laurel. Under these auspicious circumstances, Schiller continued his labours with much improved taste though perhaps not augmented power, and brought forth those splendid creations in the line of historical tragedy, which have been regarded by his countrymen and the literary world of Europe as among the greatest wonders of modern art. In them the loftiest and purest characters of different ages and countries take the place of the ruffians and robbers of his first efforts: the noblest sentiments and most affecting catastrophes are substituted for the gross and revolting horrors of the Newgate calen-

dar. The charming Queen of Scots expiates with her liberty and life in the castle of Fotheringhay the crime of superior loveliness and wit. The high minded maid of Orleans, doomed by destiny as the reward of all her patriotic devotion to the stake, in her life time and after death to a triple poetical martyrdom under the hands of Voltaire, Shakespeare and Southey,—appears for once in the splendid romantic tragedy of Schiller, an inspired heroine of more than mortal grandeur and dignity. Philosophy personified in the Marquis of Posa, elevates her solemn and imposing voice at the Court of the Spanish Philip. Finally the three parts of Wallenstein unroll before us the splendid pageant of the Thirty years' war,—the Iliad of German history. The superstitious and fanatical, but ambitious, grand, and high souled Wallenstein, sinks under the dagger of the assassin at the moment when he is courting the auspicious planets to reveal to him the secrets of his fortune. The noble minded and religious hero of the North breathes out his generous soul upon the battle field of Lutzen,—destined two centuries afterwards to be the scene of still more desperate struggles. In the mean time the Cardinal de Richelieu from his throne in the Palace of the Tuileries manages the whole machinery of this mighty action, sustains the Protestants in Germany while he is crushing them by force of arms in France, until at length his profound and masterly genius represented in the field by the premature greatness of Conde and the experienced bravery of Turenne, terminates the

long religious wars and gives universal peace to Europe. Of this splendid action, undoubtedly the most imposing and interesting in the whole compass of modern history, some of the prominent points appear with corresponding effect and dignity in the *Wallenstein* of Schiller. The same subject is also attempted in his history of the Thirty years' war, which remains incomplete. Not content with these labours, he mingled in the philosophical movement of the time and threw off some of the finest fruits of his genius in his lyrical poems, which are also for the most part, instinct with the spirit of philosophy. The *Song of the Bell* presents in a series of bright and graphic sketches, a vivid representation of the various scenes of social life. The *Worth of Woman* describes in contrast, with great felicity of style, the two principal aspects of the human character, which are determined by the difference of sex. May I venture to quote a few verses in an English translation, as at once a specimen of the Poets manner, and a proof of the decided partiality which he seems to have entertained through life for the fairer part of the human family ?

THE WORTH OF WOMAN.

Honored be woman ! She beams on the sight,
Graceful and fair, like a being of light ;
Scatters around her, wherever she strays,
Roses of bliss on our thorn-covered ways,
Roses of Paradise, sent from above
To be gathered and twined in a garland of love.

Man on Passion's stormy ocean
 Tossed by surges mountains high,
 Courts the hurricane commotion,
 Spurns at Reason's feeble cry.
 Loud the tempest roars around him,
 Louder still it wars within,
 Flashing lights of Hope confound him,
 Stuns him life's incessant din.

Woman invites him, with bliss in her smile,
 To cease from his toil and be happy a while,
 Whispering wooingly,—come to my bower!
 Go not in search of the phantom of Power!
 Honor and wealth are illusory: come!
 Happiness dwells in the temple of Home.

Man, with fury stern and savage,
 Persecutes his brother man;
 Reckless if he bless or ravage:
 Action,—action,—still his plan.
 Now creating; now destroying;
 Ceaseless wishes tear his breast.
 Ever wishing;—ne'er enjoying;—
 Still to be—but never blest.

Woman, contented in silent repose,
 Enjoys in its beauty life's flower as it blows,
 And waters and tends it with innocent heart;
 Far richer than man with his treasures of art,
 And wiser by far in her circle confined
 Than he with his science and flights of the mind.

Coldly to himself sufficing
 Man disdains the gentler arts,
 Knoweth not the bliss arising
 From the interchange of hearts.

Slowly through his bosom stealing
 Flows the genial current on,
 Till by age's frost congealing
 It is hardened into stone.

She, like the harp that instinctively sings,
 As the night-breathing zephyr soft sighs o'er the
 strings,
 Responds to each impulse with ready reply,
 Whether sorrow or pleasure her sympathy try,
 And tear-drops and smiles on her countenance play,
 Like the sunshine and showers of a morning in May.

In the realm of man's dominion
 Terror is the ruling word,
 And the standard of opinion
 Is the temper of the sword ;
 Strife exults and Pity, blushing,
 From the scene despairing flies,
 Where to battle madly rushing
 Brother upon brother dies.

Woman commands with a milder control,
 She rules by enchantment the realm of the soul.
 As she glances around in the light of her smile,
 The war of the Passions is hushed for a while,
 And Discord, content from his fury to cease,
 Reposes entranced on the pillow of Peace.

Schiller and Goethe like most of their contemporaries and followers in Germany, were admirers, I might almost say, worshippers of Shakespeare. Schiller translated some of his works. In consequence of these circumstances he has been sometimes represented as possessing a kindred if not an equal genius. But this is an entirely mistaken view of his poetical character, which has little or

nothing in common with that of Shakespeare except the dramatic form of his principal works. If it were necessary to compare him with any English writer, he might be assimilated with much more justice to Milton. His tragedies bear a greater likeness to *Comus* and the *Sampson Agonistes* than to *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. The Great Poet must undoubtedly unite with his creative Fancy the power of profound and original Thought. Schiller and Shakespeare possessed both these elements of greatness,—perhaps we may say in the highest degree ;—but the mode and extent in which they were respectively developed, were determined for each by the circumstances under which he lived. Shakespeare flourished in an age of immature civilization and was destitute in a great measure of the learning of his time. In him the poetical element decidedly predominates, and displays itself with a vigor which, we may say with safety, was never attained in any other case, although no single work of his may be equal in grandeur to the *Paradise Lost*. His power of thought, which is not less remarkable than his imagination, exhibits itself, unaffected by the influence of scholastic learning, in the most just, felicitous, and at the same time perfectly original observations on life and nature. In Schiller the philosophical element maintains its ascendancy over that of imagination ; all his poems,—to use the language of Shakespeare,—are “sicklied o’er with a pale cast of thought.” In this respect and indeed in all others he resembles Byron much

more than the mighty minstrel of the Avon. The tragedies of Byron give a better idea perhaps than any others in our language of the manner of Schiller, but the German Poet has in one respect the advantage of his British competitor. The philosophy of Byron is cold, sensual, degrading, and essentially false; that of Schiller noble, generous, inspiring and true. Byron is the poet of scepticism, immorality and despair. He has no faith in humanity or virtue, excepting now and then when a gleam of truth forces itself, as it were spontaneously, through the gloom in which unhappy associations had shrouded the original brightness of his mind. Fortunately for the character of Byron, a single elevated sentiment, the passion for liberty, redeems the generally low strain of his meditations, and brings him into practical communion with minds of a different order from his own. In Schiller the same love of liberty appears in conjunction with unshaken faith in virtue and religion; unshaken and immoveable because it results from a natural sympathy with every thing noble and generous in humanity, or sublime and beautiful in the spectacle of universal nature. Their most successful attempts in the exhibition of female character illustrate very curiously the respective conditions of their own minds. Myrrha, —the highest reach of Byron's power of poetical production,—is a young Greek girl, who graces with her love and generous zeal for freedom, the last moments of a corrupt and sensual despot. On the other hand, the master-piece in character

of Schiller, the pure, beautiful, and noble-minded Maid of Orleans, under the immediate inspiration of a higher power, unfurls the standard of her oppressed country and cheerfully sacrifices life in securing independence and liberty. So inspiring was this lofty strain to the kindred souls of the youth of Germany, that when the German armies on their way into France in 1814 passed through the little village of Domremi, near Orleans, where the heroine was born, they repaired in crowds, as if it had been a consecrated shrine, to her humble dwelling, which the wits of France had made a theme of mockery. In moral elevation and grandeur, perhaps no character in Shakespeare can be placed upon a level with the Maid of Orleans. His supernatural creations are the mere sports of a brilliant fancy; his best human characters are deeply imbued with human imperfections. The Maid of Orleans is the spirit of pure patriotism, embellished by the graces of youth and beauty, and idealised by direct inspiration from above. We may be told that such a character is against nature; no, gentlemen, it is only above it; it is nature,—noble, beautiful, sublime nature,—still farther beautified, ennobled, elevated, by the magic power of art. Is the splendid Apollo of the Vatican unnatural because no living man ever displayed the human form in such perfect symmetry? Is the Venus of the Medicean Palace unnatural because no single female figure ever united such unrivalled beauty with so much graceful modesty? Is not moral beauty as real as

physical? Are Love,—Patriotism,—Virtue,—unmeaning words? Does not the heart swell,—the pulse beat higher,—the tear rush unbidden to the eye at their very sound? Has not Washington lived, and Warren died? These sublime and beautiful ideas; the sources of everything good and great in action,—are as true to nature as they are sublime and beautiful. If they were not in nature how could we possess them; and are they not our best and richest possessions? Did man create out of nothing the golden links that bind him to the foot-stool of the Deity?

These ideas, gentlemen, are in our nature; they are the best part of our nature, and the noblest province of Art is to array them in her beautiful dresses for the love and admiration of the world. I acknowledge that Schiller is inferior to Shakespeare in brilliancy and richness of fancy; in originality, depth, and precision of thought; in that curious felicity of language which places the wizard of Avon far above all competition in any age or country. But when I see the Poet of Germany surpassing him in the grandeur, beauty, and dignity of his moral conceptions, I feel that he moves in a higher walk of art, though perhaps with less transcendent power of execution. In short, gentlemen, there is between Shakespeare and Schiller, though they are often brought into comparison, very little resemblance or rivalry. Their minds are the products of different ages and forms of civilization. They cannot of course, be properly compared. Both are poets of

the highest order, and each has his own field in which he rises superior to the other. Without seeking to balance their claims to admiration, let us receive them both as ministers of a bounteous providence to the delight and lasting improvement of the world.

So much for the character and merits of one of the two great masters of German literature. Let me now invite your attention for a few minutes to the character of Goethe. Here we find ourselves at once in contact with a mind of a still loftier cast ; an eye that pierces still more deeply into the mysteries of nature ; a hand that sweeps with still more exquisite mastery the enchanting spell, and draws from it soft and solemn breathing airs that steal with a still more ravishing witchery over the delighted spirit. It is curious to trace these grand intellectual and moral wonders to their obscure origin.* The magnificent genius of Shakespeare appears to the world in the disguise of a little village school master and a second rate actor. Goethe is the son of a quiet and orderly magistrate of the free and imperial city of Frankfort on the Mein. His companionship is with the sons and daughters of the honest and busy burghers around him. How should the golden dreams of Art and Poetry visit his slumbers, or the light of divine Philosophy find its way into the thick darkness of his intellectual prison-house ? His destiny is doubtless through life to copy municipal accounts and tie up bundles of papers with red tape ; perhaps in time, after a long course of useful services

of this description, to shine forth upon the eyes of the wondering crowd as the Burgomaster of their free and imperial city. Alas, no! Genius by its own mental alchemy draws its appropriate nourishment alike from the lowliest and the richest materials. The soul of nature speaks to that of the young poet and philosopher through the sallow wrinkled face of the quiet old city as eloquently as if he had passed his youth among the giant glaciers and mountain cataracts of Switzerland, or in the orange bowers of the south of Italy. The most common-place objects are full of inspiration for him. The minster of Strasburg, for the rest a clumsy crumbling old pile of stone, is rich with historical recollections. The gilded weathercock on the City Hall fills him with a glow of rapture as he sees it glittering on the spire. The humble attendant at the next inn, is a bright vision of beauty and loveliness, the Margaret of his future Faust. In the dusty cabinet of the worthy magistrate his father, his quiet is troubled by doubts about the order of society,—and the economy of the universe. His restless contemplations drive him almost to madness. He must express them, or perish under the withering oppression. An accidental occurrence among his own acquaintance determines the form in which he will utter them. A young clergyman, in a fit of disappointed love, commits suicide. Goethe idealises this tragedy in the *Sorrows of Werther*, the first fervid and passionate outpouring of his still immature genius. He finds himself at once in intimate communion

with the popular heart of Germany, and rises from his humble obscurity to the dazzling but stormy summits of fame. At the same time, the mysteries which as exhibited in the order of society had prompted his first productions, besiege his fancy as they appear in more appalling forms, and on a far more extended scale in the spectacle of the Universe. The wild fiction of the German printer who obtained the reputation of a sorcerer, by first making use of moveable types, now serves as a vehicle for these impressions, which are embodied in a premature sketch of Faust,—destined in its more perfect form to be the principal achievement of the author's poetical life.

What the career of Goethe might have been had he now been left to pursue a natural course of literary labor under the cheering impulse of the popular favor which he had gained, and in full communion with the mighty current of feeling that constantly swells the popular heart,—it is now of little use to conjecture. It would probably have been more active and honorable than it was, for the principal works of Goethe are, after all, rather indications than complete and finished exhibitions of his transcendent powers. But chance and fate happen to all. There reigned at this time in one of the little principalities of Germany, a prince and princess who felt the desire, so uncommon in hereditary sovereigns, to surround themselves with men of genius, learning and refinement. Struck with admiration at the brilliancy of Goethe's first literary efforts, they invited him at once to their

Court where they gave him official rank and received him as an intimate of their own confidential circle. What is more remarkable and still more honorable to them, than even this generous tribute to exalted genius,—the sovereigns of Weimar continued their favor through life to its illustrious subject, who was after a time designated and remained till his death the Prime Minister of their little Principality. This career, though it would have been regarded for a man of ordinary or even superior powers as a fortunate and brilliant one, was not particularly favorable to the highest possible development of the splendid capacity of Goethe. While his position imposed upon him a multitude of daily duties which absorbed his care and time, it must have been a bar to the natural flow of his feelings upon some of the most important subjects, particularly those of human rights and liberty, which have so deeply agitated the Christian world during the whole of his career. When the American Commissioners presented themselves at the Court of Joseph II., Emperor of Austria, to demand the recognition of the Independence of the United States, the sagacious despot received them with kindness, but replied in the negative :—“ Gentlemen,” said he, “ I am by trade a royalist.” When we see the poet, who in the first warm effusions of his youth had exhibited so keen a sensibility to the abuses of the order of society then established in Europe, regarding in his mature years with complete indifference the mighty effort in the cause of reform which agitated the world,

we are tempted to account for this singular fact, by recollecting that the young and ardent poet had in the interval been transformed into the veteran minister of a Prince as absolute in his narrow circle as the Holy Roman Emperor. But the bands which confined the free soul of Goëthe, if such they were, were chains of flowers. He was surrounded with splendor, luxury and intellectual communion of the highest order. When it suited his convenience he was permitted to travel in other parts of Europe, and seems to have taken great delight in an excursion to Italy, which is described with detail in his auto-biography, one of the most voluminous and amusing of his various writings. In another of his works, he places in the mouth of one of his fictitious characters a song, which has been greatly admired and which seems to embody his own fond recollections of the same delicious climate.

Know'st thou the land in which the Lemon blows ?
 On its dark branch the golden Orange glows ?
 And gentle gales to cool the summer hours
 Breathe soft from azure skies o'er beds of flowers ?
 Know'st thou the land ? How sweet to stray
 With thee in that blest clime : Belov'd one ! Come,—
 away !

I will not, gentlemen, undertake to enumerate and comment upon all the works of Goethe. The occasion does not require this, nor would the time at my disposal permit of it. Let us, however, dwell a few moments upon the one, which chiefly sustains his reputation and which is ranked by

general acknowledgment among the most remarkable productions in the compass of literature,—I mean the celebrated poem of *Faust*. This was the great work of Goethe's life. The subject dawned upon his mind in the midst of the first effervescence of his youthful fancy, and was then, as I remarked before, embodied in an imperfect sketch. At a later and more mature period he resumed the task and moulded his work by revision and addition into the shape in which we have it. His plan, however, was not yet accomplished, and much of his attention, during his later years, was given to a continuation, of which some portions have been published. They indicate but too clearly the decline, or rather total prostration of the author's poetical powers, and leave no regret that even in this imperfect style, the design was still not entirely completed.

Faust is the drama of universal nature ;—the tragi-comedy, if I may use the expression,—of God, man, and the universe. The Poet grasps the grand problem of the origin of evil, with which the human mind, unassisted by revelation, has in all ages vainly struggled,—brings it before the mind in its appalling reality by a few vivid pictures, and then offers in the same form the only possible solution of it as the sublime and consolatory truths of Religion. The fable in its naked simplicity,—as I have remarked already,—is the ancient popular legend, according to which the celebrated printer Faust abandons his soul to eternal suffering hereafter, on condition of the complete satisfaction of

all his wishes in the present world. The form of the work is borrowed in part from the scripture tragedy of Job and opens in like manner with a sort of celestial council, in which Satan or Mephistopheles, as he is here called, appears in person and obtains the divine permission to try the virtue of the celebrated Doctor. This bold conception is executed in a sort of serio-comic style with masterly skill and prodigious effect.

The scene now changes to the earth. Faust is introduced in his cabinet, surrounded with books, and at the same time, beset with cares, and doubts,—the victim of weariness, disgust and despair. This moody disposition is pleasantly illustrated by a dialogue that occurs at this part of the poem between him and a student who is residing at the house. The student hears his master, who is engaged in an earnest colloquy with the unearthly spirits whom he has evoked, talking very loudly; and supposing him to be reciting a Greek play makes him a visit for the purpose of improving his declamation. The dialogue while it exhibits the mood of the master may convey some positive instruction to the young aspirant for distinction as a preacher. Faust, as he hears the student knock at his door breaks out into a transport of disgust.

Oh death! 'tis he,—I know his knock :
 Perdition seize the senseless block !
 While communing with spirits face to face
 'Tis hard to be called off by this dull pratapace.

The Student enters.

Forgive me Sir ! I heard your declamation
And thought you must be reading some Greek play.
I long have wished to mend my recitation :
'Tis necessary at the present day.
A clergyman, indeed, 'tis often said,
Should to an actor go to learn his trade.

Faust.

Aye ! if he mean himself to be a player,
And that is not unfrequently the case.

Student.

But how should one who hardly feels the air
Or sees the light, except on holidays,
Nailed to his parchment rolls without vacation
Know any thing of graces or persuasion ?

Faust.

Persuasion, friend ! comes not by toil or art :
Hard study never made the matter clearer.
'Tis the live fountain in the speaker's heart
Sends forth the streams that melt the ravished hearer.
Then work away for life : heap book on book,
Line upon line, and precept on example.
The stupid multitude may gape and look
And fools may think your stock of wisdom ample,
But if by touching hearts you'd make your pelf,
First try, good friend ! to have a heart yourself.

Student.

But still the manner's every thing in preaching,
I know it though I fail in that particular.

Faust.

Manner ! find out some matter worth the teaching,
Nor be for words and forms an empty stickler.
The spirit's all : no matter for the letter,
Good sense and truth are good enough for men.

Hast any thing to say ? Out with it then ;
 And the more natural the style the better.
 Your pompous words,—your phrases nicely joined,
 Will find the people deaf as any adder ;
 They're but dry leaves, that rustle in the wind,
 No comfort for the soul :—peas in a bladder.

Student.

But art, alas ! is long, and life is short ;
 How much to learn !—how little time to learn it !
 This studying hard is after all, dull sport :
 And head aches oft compel me to adjourn it.
 How hard to master all the kinds of aid
 That help us on to wisdom's fountain-head !
 And then before the journey is half made,
 The chance is, the poor traveller is dead.

Faust.

What fountain-head ? Is parchment then the spring
 At which the soul must quench its dying thirst ?
 My friend, for this no streams refreshment bring
 Unless the source in thine own bosom burst.

Student.

But, pardon me, it gives me great delight
 To enter into the spirit of various ages,
 And see the progress we have made in light,
 Compared with what was known by ancient sages.

Faust.

Great progress to be sure ! Of ages past
 Mine honest friend ! the knowledge we inherit
 Is small : their history is a book sealed fast :
 And what we call the spirit of an age
 Is commonly the gentleman's own spirit,
 Quickening the letter of some musty page.

Student.

But then mankind,—the world,—the human heart,—
You'll grant that these, at least, are points of
knowledge.

Faust.

Points, if you please,—but which, with all your art,
You'll find it very hard to learn at college.
Besides :—what serves your learning ?—when all's o'er
You dare not tell the world what you have learnt :
The few, that having gained this valued lore,
Had not sufficient caution to disguise it,
And to the crowd displayed their precious store,
Have for their pains been crucified and burnt,
To prove how well the crowd knew how to prize it.
But come, my friend, 'tis late ;—we'll break off here.

Student.

Sir, as you please,—I gladly would remain,
To talk with you so learnedly a year.
I hope tomorrow you'll give me leave again
To ask a few more questions of you here.
Though I know much, I can't but feel uneasiness
Until I reach the bottom of the business.

Released from the importunity of this *Philistine*,
—to use an expressive German term,—Faust relapses
into his former gloom. Dark and bewildering
thoughts crowd upon his fancy, and plunge him
deeper and deeper into the “slough of Despond”
in which he is engulfed, until at length in his
agony of feeling he resolves to shake off the
burden of his miserable existence by suicide. He
grasps the poisoned vial, which he has long kept
by him for this purpose, and is in the act of lifting
it to his lips, when his ears are saluted from with-

out by the sound of cheerful voices, singing in several choirs, the Easter hymn of the Catholic Liturgy, which celebrates the Resurrection and Ascension of the Redeemer. The first choir represents the angels at the Sepulchre replying to the women.

Chorus of Angels.

Rejoice ! ye sons of men ! rejoice ! awake the choral strain !
The Saviour who was crucified has broken his death-chain :
And mounting high above the sky to realms of brighter day,
He points you to a better world and proudly leads the way.

This sublime strain, so finely adjusted to the gloomy mood of Faust, attracts his attention, and arrests his purpose. He continues his reflections in a gentler tone.

Faust.

What glorious sounds are these that break at once
So loud and clear upon the stilly night ?
Is this the midnight bell that should announce
The approach of Easter Sunday's holy light ?
And does the choir repeat the charming strain,
That angels sang of old on Judah's blessed plain,
Proclaiming Peace on Earth——But, hark ! that sound
again !

A chorus of female voices, continuing the hymn, again interrupts him. They represent the women at the Sepulchre, lamenting the removal of its departed tenant, and are followed by another strain from the Chorus of Angels, repeating the assurance of his resurrection.

Chorus of Women.

With sweetest spices o'er him strewed, in finest linen bound,
We laid him,—we that loved him much,—in his cold burial
ground :

And now we fondly came again to wash with many a tear
The grave in which we buried him, but ah ! he is not here.

Chorus of Angels.

Rejoice ! ye sons of men ! rejoice ! the Loving One that
bore

The agonies of death for you, is buried here no more :
But mounting high above the sky to realms of brighter day,
He points you to a better world and proudly leads the way.

Faust, gradually softened by the continuance of
the music to which he has been accustomed from
his childhood, and which is associated with all the
delightful recollections of infancy and early youth,
at length abandons his purpose, and resigns him-
self to the influence of his better feelings.

Faust.

Celestial sounds ! Why come ye here to greet
A grovelling earth-worm with your cheerful breath ?
Go ! tell your tale where softer bosoms beat :
I hear the message well, but want the saving faith.
Faith dearly loves the miracles she hears,
And most delights where wonder most abounds,
But I no more may reach the lofty spheres,
From which the voice of Revelation sounds.
Yet ah ! in youth how sweetly o'er me fell,
Heaven's kiss of love upon the Sabbath day !
How full of meaning was the deep-toned bell,
And what an extacy it was to pray !

Strange longings led me from my parents' hearth,
 O'er hill and dale to wander far and near,
 And there with many a hotly-gushing tear,
 I felt an unknown world within me have its birth,
 And now,—e'en now,—with that accustomed song,
 So often heard in youth's enchanting hours,
 What hosts of cheerful recollections throng
 Upon my mind, and nerve my fainting powers!
 Oh, sing again! sweet voices! as before,
 I weep! I feel myself a man once more.

The hymn now closes with a strain from the Chorus of Disciples, and then a renewed assurance from the angels of peace on earth and good-will to men.

Chorus of Disciples.

His mission done,—the Buried One,—has gone in peerless
 pride,
 To sit forever on his throne, by his great Father's side.
 Alas! that we, the faithful few, to whom he was so dear,
 Are left behind in misery to mourn his absence here.

Chorus of Angels.

Rejoice! ye sons of men! rejoice! awake the choral strain,
 The Saviour who was crucified has broken his death-chain.
 And ye that followed him with love, if ye but duly prize,
 On earth the counsels that he gave, shall meet him in the
 skies.

This splendid scene,—one of the finest and most effective in the whole range of poetry, though introduced near the beginning of the piece, contains the moral of the whole. It is the same with that of its sublime prototype in Scripture, where the Supreme Being speaks in the whirlwind, and

silences the murmurs of scepticism in a strain of truly divine eloquence. Religion,—God,—is in either case the word of deep and mighty import which solves the great problem, and explains every thing which would otherwise be insolubly mysterious in man and in the universe.

On Faust, however, who is intended as an image of frail and erring humanity, the impression is merely temporary. In the next scene we find him surrounded by evil spirits and concluding his compact agreeably to the popular tradition. He now by the aid of his attendant evil genius, puts on the form of a young and gallant cavalier, and sets forth in search of adventures. The scene is laid in various walks of actual life and in the wildest regions of imaginary existence, which are all described with extraordinary power and effect. I cannot of course on this occasion pursue the subject into these details. The work, as I remarked before, remains unfinished. So far as it proceeds it exhibits the hero unhappy in the midst of enjoyment; mocked by the evil spirit that has tempted him, tormented with forebodings of the future, and vainly regretting the peace of mind which belongs only to innocence and goodness,—possessions which for him are lost forever.

This powerful production placed its author by general consent at the head of the literature of his country,—a place which he maintained through life with very little aid from his subsequent publications, none of which can be compared, for ability and effect, to the Faust. He kept himself,

as I said before, entirely aloof from the great political movement, which commenced at an early period in his career, and in which most of the literary men of his time enlisted with ardor on one side or the other. He accompanied the Prussian army which invaded France in 1792, as a sort of representative of the Duke of Saxe Weimar, and has left some descriptions of that ill-starred campaign; but he took no farther part in the controversies of the French Revolution. Nor do we find him at a later period concurring actively in any way in the strong reaction in favor of moral and religious ideas which ensued upon the crisis of that great convulsion, and which still forms the leading tendency in the literature of Europe. It is therefore with some surprise that I have seen him recently described in the writings of Carlyle as a sort of second Luther; the apostle,—as it were,—of a new religious and moral dispensation. I find no ground for such description in his writings, nor any shadow of evidence that he pretended himself to such a character. The moral effect of his works is undoubtedly good,—and the train of thought in those of later date, bears the impression of the improved state of public opinion, which they in turn no doubt contributed to confirm and promote. But they all seem to have been written and published merely as works of art, and with an exclusive view to poetical and literary effect. As literary works, their influence was prodigious at home and abroad. They form, with those of Schiller, the

basis of the extensive superstructure of the modern literature of Germany, and they gave a strong impulse to the public mind in various other countries. The inspiration of Scott may be traced very distinctly to this source. Byron in his later writings, some of which are direct imitations of Goethe, was much under his influence, and dedicates one of them to him as the reigning monarch of European literature. On contemporary French learning his influence in common with that of Schiller, has also been extensive, and is seen particularly in the works of Madame de Stael and Benjamin Constant. Chateaubriand was prevented by his want of acquaintance with the German language from feeling its effect. On the present generation of English writers the influence of German literature, and particularly of Goethe, is constantly advancing. Several translations, none, however, of first rate merit, have been made of the Faust, and the author, as I remarked just now, has received at the hands of Carlyle a sort of moral apotheosis, which, if it prove nothing else, proves at least the highest admiration of his genius. Even at this great distance his fame is well established, and is rapidly extending. One of the fair students of German literature in the neighborhood of Boston, is at this time preparing a biography of Goethe. At home he was the object through the latter part of his life, of a feeling that bordered very nearly on adoration. He survived to an advanced age, without experiencing the proverbial fickleness either of princely

or popular favor, both of which attended him unimpaired to his last hour, and his death was followed by funeral honors throughout all Germany. It was thus, gentlemen, that this gifted mind found its way to the "silent, solemn SPIRIT LAND,"—of which the faint and far-off anticipation fills with a sort of dim religious foreboding, the pathetic verses which he prefixed to the *Faust*, and which I will venture to recall to your memory.

THE SPIRIT LAND.

Again ye throng around me, shadowy dreams,
 That wont before my youthful eyes to play !
 Shall I once more your ever-changing gleams
 Attempt to catch before they pass away.
 And now ye nearer press. Then since it seems
 Ye must and will appear, I bid you stay ;
 Although your presence racks my tortured brain,
 With a deep sense of long-forgotten pain.

For with you come fond thoughts of many a day
 Of bliss, and many a form to fancy dear ;
 And like some ancient half-remembered lay,
 Departed loves and friendships re-appear.
 Fresh bleeds each grief, that time could ne'er allay,
 And Memory reckons o'er with woe severe,
 The Good whose flower of happiness was crost
 In its fresh bud,—the early Loved and Lost.

They cannot hear the lays that now I sing,
 The gentle hearts for whom I sang before ;
 Dissevered is the friendly gathering,
 And that first kind response is heard no more.

The few survivors of my joyous spring,
 Are scattered far o'er many a sea and shore ;
 While I, abandoned, tune my ancient strain
 To a strange crowd, whose very praise is pain.

And o'er me steals a long unfelt desire
 To reach the silent, solemn SPIRIT LAND ;
 Low, lisping notes as of the Eolian lyre,
 Breathe from the strings beneath my wavering
 hand,
 Tears follow fast on tears : the soul of fire
 Grows faint and weak,—by softness all unman'd ;
 And the fair scenes in which my lot is cast,
 Appear like dreams : I live but in the past.

I have thus, gentlemen, with the brevity required by the occasion, though very ill suited to the rich and various character of the topic, attempted to present to you an outline of the literature of Germany. I have also adverted in the same brief and incomplete manner to its influence on the literature of other parts of Europe and America. Let me call your attention for one moment longer in conclusion to its practical effect upon the political situation of Germany itself. This is one of the most curious topics connected with the subject, and illustrates more clearly, perhaps, than almost any other known fact, the real value to the community of that intellectual and moral culture which is sometimes underrated in comparison with pursuits that terminate in the acquisition of mere physical wealth. There cannot be a doubt, that the development of literature and philosophy which took place in Germany during the last century,

was the principal thing which ultimately, after many reverses, reinforced the national spirit, nerved the national arm with patriotic fervor, sustained the people in their long and bloody contest with the armies of Napoleon, and finally secured the national independence.

At the opening of the French Revolution there was and could be little or no national feeling in this vast body politic, broken up as it was into several hundred principalities, separated from each other by political divisions, which were embittered in many cases by long cherished mutual hostilities. The Holy Roman Empire, as the political system of Germany was then called, was a sort of antique castle, once strong and well defended, now crumbling and tottering with the effect of years. It yielded at the first touch from the giant arm of the French Revolution. While that great movement was met by nothing but the usual resources of disciplined armies and combinations of state policy, it swept all before it almost without opposition. The ancient governments disappeared one after another, and yielded their places to new principalities and powers of foreign aspect and origin. The Rhine was no longer the barrier between France and Germany. Four or five times in succession the French armies poured like a torrent over her cultivated plains and populous cities. Austerlitz, Jena, Wagram had successively sealed her doom as it seemed beyond redemption. The brothers of the French Despot occupied thrones in some of the fairest portions of the land.

The Courts that retained a nominal independence seemed to be completely bewildered by the mingled fascination and terror that surrounded the person of Napoleon. From that quarter there was evidently no hope or prospect of deliverance. Had the intellectual and moral condition of the people remained as it had been in the earlier part of the century, they on their part would have soon acquiesced with equal indifference under foreign sway, and the national independence of the German nation, the root and source of so much that is most excellent and promising in the present civilization of the world, would have perished forever.

But in the mean time, gentlemen, while the French Revolution was thus overturning or new modelling, to suit its own purposes, the ancient institutions of the country, a new state of public opinion had gradually grown up which was determined in a great degree by the brilliant development of literature and philosophy to which I have called your attention. The youth of Germany had adopted with enthusiasm the patriotic spirit,—the lofty tone of thought and feeling which prevailed among the literary men. To that feeling the appeal was finally made, and it proved successful. The students in all the universities formed themselves into private associations, and so intense was the excitement that it rose in some instances to actual insanity, resulting in violence and death. Such was the case of the unfortunate Sand, who, under mistaken feelings of patriotism wrought up

to the pitch of positive frenzy assassinated the poet Kotzebue, whom he looked upon as an enemy to his country. These associations adopted a peculiar costume, resembling that worn by the Germans of the middle ages, and assumed as their device,—*Virtue—Science—Fatherland*.

In aid of the objects of these associations, another was formed in the kingdom of Prussia, among the young men of a somewhat more advanced age denominated the *Tugend Bund*, or LEAGUE OF VIRTUE. At the head of it was placed the Queen of Prussia, one of the most interesting characters of the eventful period in which she lived: a princess who combined with the beauty and grace of the celebrated queen of France, the virtues of a christian and the lofty soul of a hero. The misfortunes of her country crushed her generous spirit and hurried her to an early grave, but not until she had done much by her influence and example to rouse the dormant energies of her subjects. When the reverses of the French in Russia at length opened a prospect of successful resistance, the effect of these arrangements was soon perceived. The young men of Germany rushed with one accord to the field, and displayed a self-devotion in the cause of their country that was never surpassed in the purest days of Greece or Rome. For three whole days in succession their dauntless and persevering courage bore the brunt of the veteran armies of France, commanded by the Emperor Napoleon himself, and fought and gained at Leipsic that

celebrated *Battle of the Nations*, which secured the independence of Germany. Never had a people wrought such miracles of valor, patriotism, and virtue, as were then performed by the young men of Germany. Never, perhaps, were courage, virtue, and patriotism so ill rewarded. In summoning the young men of Germany to aid in delivering their country from a foreign foe, the sovereigns had solemnly assured them that they should receive as the noblest compensation for their efforts, and the only one which they would consent to accept, the establishment of liberal political constitutions. In many of the principal German States, and particularly in Prussia, where the ardor of the educated youth in the national cause was more conspicuous than any where else, this promise,—to the lasting dishonor of the government,—yet remains to be accomplished. Let us rejoice, gentlemen, that the lines have fallen to us in a region where the liberty of the people is not dependent on the faith of princes.

Among the gallant young men of Germany, who rushed to arms in their country's cause at the memorable epoch to which I have alluded, there was one who deserves to be particularly mentioned in an address on German literature, not only for his conspicuous patriotism at a time when almost every well educated youth was a patriot and a soldier, but as one of the leading representatives of the most recent literature of his country. I allude to Koerner, the admired and lamented Tyrtaeus of this new crusade in the cause of liberty.

Koerner was a native of Vienna, of easy fortune and honorable connexions. In the bloom of youth he had already won distinction by his efforts in poetry, and had formed a union with the object of his passionate attachment, which left nothing to desire in his prospect of happiness. Life opened before him like a long vista of enchantment,—but nothing could check his determined zeal in the cause of independence and liberty. In vain his literary friends, his agonizing wife and family urged him to content himself by sustaining the cause with his pen. His reply was that of the gallant and generous martyr of Bunker's Hill when urged by the council of war on the morning of the battle not to expose his person in the approaching action. "I should die with shame if I were to stay quietly at home in the bosom of my family while my friends and companions were exposing their lives in the cause!" Koerner raised a corps of light cavalry and joined the army, where he distinguished himself greatly in the eventful campaigns of the last years of the war. In assuming the sword he did not, however, abandon the Lyre. In the midst of the perils and fatigues of the weary march, the crowded encampment and the battle field, he continued to pour forth a succession of national and patriotic songs, which were set to music and sung with enthusiasm by the armies. Koerner shared the fate, as he had exhibited the generous self devotion of Warren. The beloved of Heaven, says the Greek proverb, die young. The blooming hero-poet of Vienna never returned to his

native city, and the bright eyes that so long looked forth fondly for him from the banks of the dark-rolling Danube saw him no more. Who could lament such a death? What generous spirit would not rather turn from the dull routine of ordinary business, with its low pursuits,—its bitter contentions,—its heartless friendships,—to contemplate with envy the fortune of the gallant youth who, in the bright morning of life, with his laurels fresh upon his brow, breathed out his generous soul in a strain of swanlike song. His grateful countrymen have formed a collection of his poems under the title of *the Lyre and the Sword*. It will remain a monument to his memory, as long as patriotism and poetry shall be valued in Germany. They are among the most original and important additions that have recently been made to her popular poetry.

Such, gentlemen, are the trials to which the young men of Germany,—the students of her universities, and the brightest ornaments of her literature,—have been called within our time: so nobly have they acquitted themselves of the high duties that devolved upon them. You too, gentlemen, had such been your fortune, would have given not less glorious proofs of patriotic self devotion and zeal for liberty. What American bosom ever failed to respond with enthusiasm to any appeal that was made to it in the sacred cause of our country? But, gentlemen, the trials which you have to encounter, perhaps not less arduous, are of a different character. They are those that

belong to a prosperous and peaceful condition of the country. The voice of war which has twice disturbed our favored region has now retired to a distance,—may we not hope for a long time to come?—and only visits us as heard from other lands coming like a faint and far-off murmur to heighten the enjoyment of peace. Our national independence and liberty,—secured to us by the valor, wisdom and virtue of our fathers,—require no new struggles. We hold them, blessed be Heaven! not at the disposition of hereditary princes, but from the bounty of Providence and the virtue of the people. The poems that amuse your leisure are not the martial lays that summon the soldier to battle, but gentle strains of domestic peace and love. If you set forth on distant excursions, it is not to encounter the dangers of the battle field,—but to select the particular spot in the vast expanse of our blooming paradise of freedom and plenty in which it best suits you to fix your residence.

What a glorious destiny! Never perhaps did a generation of educated men enter upon a fairer or a more extensive field of honor and usefulness than that which opens upon the young men who go forth this day from our seats of learning into the walks of busy life. The advantages of the American scholar are great and peculiar: his duties are in consequence arduous. Literature is in all cases the reflection of society: the literature of Europe is of course the reflection of a society in many respects corrupt and degraded, bowed down by oppression; animated by a spirit unfriendly to

liberty and equal rights. With us, gentlemen, society is still pure, healthy, instinct with a lively and vigorous action,—glowing with love and hope and joy,—in its political forms, a mere embodiment of the principles of equal rights and democratic liberty. Let this charming spectacle, gentlemen, be reflected in our literature. Carry out in your speeches, your writings, your actions, the spirit that animates the community in which you live. Let the world behold for the first time a literature simple, manly and vigorous,—pure from moral stain,—true to liberty and virtue,—true to Religion. Much of the poetry of Europe is corrupt and sensual: much of her philosophy false and immoral: much of her history an apology for the vices of despots, and a libel on the character of man. You are called on, gentlemen, to reform these things for the people of America. Re-write the history of the world in a new spirit. Strip the ambitious conqueror of his laurel and present him as he really is, the curse of the nations and the Scourge of God. Seek out suffering virtue in her dungeons, and reinstate her in dignity and honor as the glory of our race. Already there are great examples to encourage you:—BRYANT, IRVING, COOPER, PRESCOTT, SEDGWICK, BANCROFT are leading the way and erecting, in the language of a contemporary critic, noble and imperishable monuments to their own names, and the honor of their country.

But, gentlemen, the profession of letters will employ a comparatively small portion of the

activity of the generation now entering on the stage of life. The material improvement of the country is another great and pressing object. A vast continent is to be subdued and brought under cultivation as the abode and garden of civilized man. The wilderness must be made to blossom like the rose. The far-extending Rail Road must bind together the remotest regions with its iron chains in indissoluble bands of brotherhood. The wonder-working power of steam must annihilate space and time, and bring us into neighborhood with the once remote continents of the old world. These, gentlemen, are the vast enterprizes in which the present generation find its favorite occupation and highest enjoyment. Less noble, less difficult, than the labors of the Fathers who founded the colonies, secured independence and formed our political institutions, they are the appropriate task of our time. The sons must perfect and adorn what the fathers created. Engage in them, gentlemen, such of you as feel yourselves called to these employments, with characteristic American activity. Fame and wealth shall reward your labors. You shall write your names on tables of ever-during granite in characters of iron, and be ranked hereafter among the benefactors of your country. Here, too, great examples are before you :—FRANKLIN, RITTENHOUSE, GODFREY, WHITNEY, BOWDITCH, FULTON, CLINTON. In following along the path where they precede you as discoverers in physical science or authors of great public improvements, fear not to

be denounced as visionary. Recollect that the plan of the New York canal appeared to the liberal, far-reaching mind of Jefferson,—no plodding formalist,—too early by a century. Recollect that one of the greatest mechanical philosophers of England demonstrated within three years that it would be impossible to cross the Atlantic ocean by steam. Impossible, gentlemen, is only another name for what has not yet been done. There are secrets still undiscovered in the mysteries of nature, in comparison with which the effects of electricity, magnetism and steam will cease to be regarded as wonders.

But, gentlemen, for those of you who aspire to labor in the higher realm of mind, a still nobler field is opened, the moral culture of society. The improvements in physical science and its application to the arts,—the great glory of modern times, ---terminate after all in a mere augmentation of the material comforts and enjoyments of life: but this without a proportional improvement in the moral culture of society is at best a doubtful benefit. If the material enjoyments of the whole mass of our population could be brought to the same point with those of the wealthiest class of Europe, and attended with the same state of moral culture, the general condition of the community would be altered for the worse. The moral culture of society is therefore the mighty object to which every disposable force should be directed. Here, too, the foundations have been laid by the Fathers and nothing remains but to raise, complete and